

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2492

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0981

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTRY IN DISARRAY; CASUALTY OF NEW
GOVERNMENT'S IRRESOLUTION

1. SUMMARY. PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF GREEK FOREIGN MINISTRY
IN RECENT MONTHS HAS DECLINED NOTABLY. THIS CAN BE
ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO ABSENCE OF CAPABLE LEADERSHIP
AT THE TOP, INCLUDING THE ANDROUTSOPOULOS-APPOINTED FOREIGN
MINISTER, AND TO EXTENT MAY BE FUNCTION OF LACK OF
CONFIDENCE AND DIRECTION OF NEW GOG. GREEK DIPLOMATS HAVE
ALSO SUFFERED FROM MISTRUST BY GOG MILITARY LEADERS SINCE
COUP OF APRIL 21, 1967. LACKING AUTHORITY AND DIRECTION,
MORALE AMONG OFFICERS IS UNDERSTANDABLY LOW. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE WITNESSED CERTAIN DECLINE RECENTLY IN
COMPETENCY OF GREEK MFA WHICH HOWEVER HAS NEVER ENJOYED
REPUTATION OF PROFESSIONALISM EQUAL TO THAT OF OTHER
EUROPEAN FOREIGN SERVICES INCLUDING THAT OF NEIGHBORING
TURKEY. EMBASSY REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS ENCOUNTER
ABNORMAL DELAYS AND CLUMSY FLOUNDERING, EVEN FOR
INTERIM RESPONSES. OUR INQUIRIES TO LOCATE APPROPRIATE
OFFICIAL TO DISCUSS PARTICULAR JURISDICTIONAL/FUNCTIONAL
PROBLEMS SOMETIMES MEET WITH BEWILDERMENT AS TO WHO IS
DOING WHAT AND WHEN. PERSONNEL CHANGES CONTINUE AT A
WASTEFUL RATE; ONE BUREAU DIRECTOR OF AMBASSADORIAL RANK
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HAS HAD THREE ASSIGNMENTS IN LAST THREE MONTHS. OTHERS HAVE SEVERAL CONCURRENT ASSIGNMENTS TO COVER, WITH RESULT THEY ARE ON TOP OF NONE. GOOD BIT OF CONFUSION STEMS FROM CHANGE OF SECOND AND THIRD LEVEL OFFICIALS WITH LACK OF UNIFYING GUIDANCE FROM ABOVE. MFA'S ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING FOR PAST SIX WEEKS TO PUBLISH NEW MFA DIRECTORY OF RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT CONTINUING PERSONNEL SHIFTS CONTINUE TO HOLD THIS UP. ALSO NOTEWORTHY IS THAT OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER ANDROUTSOPOULOS IN CONTRAST TO OFFICE OF EX-PM MARKEZINIS HAS NO FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER ASSIGNED AS LIAISON. FONMIN DOES HAVE OFFICER (VASSILIKOS) ASSIGNED TO PRESIDENT GHIZIKIS, LARGELY FOR PROTOCOL FUNCTIONS. DESPITE REMOVAL OF RETIRED GENERAL YIANNARIS FROM SECRETARY GENERAL POSITION WHERE HE SERVED AS "REVOLUTION'S" KEY MAN IN THE MINISTRY, AND REMOVAL OF OTHER EX-MILITARY OFFICIALS AND AMBASSADORS, GOOD CAREER DIPLOMATS REMAIN INTIMIDATED AND FEARFUL OF CONVEYING EVEN PERSONAL OPINIONS ON SUBJECTS THAT TOUCH ON DOMESTIC SENSITIVITIES.

3. EX-PM SPYROS MARKEZINIS, WHOSE SON-IN-LAW IS GREEK DIPLOMAT, MENTIONED AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS (ATHENS-0909), THAT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNFORTUNATELY WAS NOT OPERATING AT COMPETENT LEVEL. HE NOTED FM TETENES IS NOT IN POSITION TO TAKE INITIATIVES AND IS SHACKLED BY BUREAUCRACY AND TAGNATION OF GOG WHICH PUTS GREECE AT DISADVANTAGE ON BOTH BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. ONE PROMINENT GREEK DIPLOMAT MENTIONED THAT ATMOSPHERE IN MFA IS POISONOUS. ANOTHER, REFERRING TO WIDESPREAD SAGGING MORALE AND FUMBLING, TOLD EMBOFFS THAT ALTHOUGH LOCAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED SEVERAL AMBASSADORIAL ASSIGNMENTS, AGREEMENT IN SEVERAL INSTANCES HAD NOT EVEN BEEN SOUGHT. HIS OPINION WAS THAT APPOINTMENTS HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN EFFORT TO CONVEY IMPRESSION FONMIN CARRYING ON BUSINESS NORMALLY. DUTCH FM VAN DER STOEL REPORTEDLY LABELLED FM TETENES AS "REAL PRIMITIVE" AFTER LATTER ASSAILED VAN DER STOEL IN CORRIDOR DURING DECEMBER NATO MINISTERIAL. TASCA

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